



Eugene Outdoors!

A publication of the City of Eugene Parks and Open Space Division

www.ci.eugene.or.us/parks



Special Edition
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2005

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PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE FOR THE FUTURE

by Andrea Riner, Parks Planning Manager

Working on Eugene's Parks, Recreation and Open Space Comprehensive Plan over the past couple of years has been a tremendous opportunity. I've gotten to know many of you—as individuals, neighbors and community members truly committed to building a common vision for a livable community. Through interviews, surveys, workshops, and focus groups, more than 3,000 people have been involved in this effort, and I appreciate all of the creative contributions you've made to help craft this vital blueprint for our community's future.

In addition to working closely with the community, we've worked hard to provide thorough background data to support the decision-making process. We assessed our current recreation offerings serving youth, families and seniors, as well as outdoor, aquatics, specialized recreation, and athletics programs. We also completed an inventory of our parks and open space system—all 2,900 acres of it—which includes neighborhood parks, community parks, linear parks/greenways, urban plazas, metropolitan parks, natural area parks, and special use facilities.

Based on the results of these research findings and our community outreach, we worked with a Mayor's Advisory Committee (see page 8) to build a framework for the plan. After much

analysis and impassioned discussion, it was felt that the community's vision for its parks, recreation and open space could be synthesized into the following core values: **health, equity, community, service, and sustainability**. These values formed the cornerstone for the plan's goals and strategies and ultimately the plan's specific recommendations.

This is truly a *comprehensive* plan. This is the first time Eugene has created a plan that addresses natural area protection, developed parks, and recreation services holistically. It encompasses a wide range of activities from developing new parks and recreation programs and facilities and acquiring land for parks and open space to developing creative ways to fund and maintain these new assets and keep the community informed and involved as the plan is realized. The scale of the plan considers both improvements to individual parks and programs and broad initiatives such as Rivers to Ridges, a regional vision for the area's natural resources. And, finally, the timeframe of the plan spans two decades: recommendations include those that can be implemented immediately and those that will take shape over the next 20 years.

Working on the comprehensive plan has strengthened my belief that this is a community that has made quality of life its number-one goal, and its people

know that a strong parks, recreation, and open space system is absolutely necessary in achieving that goal. That is why we have dedicated this special edition of *Eugene Outdoors!* to communicating about what this plan means to you. See the plan highlights on the map in the centerfold, read about your planning district's population characteristics, existing parks and recreation resources, and proposed actions. For more information, visit www.ci.eugene.or.us/parks/PROS/compplan.htm. If you see something you like or even something you don't like, look on page 8 for the public forum in your area and plan on attending an open house. We'd love to hear from you, and future generations will thank you!

While Andrea Riner has been practicing landscape architecture for nearly 20 years, she has found her heart and home in Eugene, where she has led the parks planning process since 1998. Under her leadership, Eugene citizens now enjoy over 450 more acres of parks and open space, 17 new neighborhood and community parks, and a comprehensive plan for how to continue making Eugene a great place to live, work and play.

values:

Health: Contribute positively to individual and community health—physical, mental, and emotional.

Equity: Ensure services are equitably distributed throughout the community.

Community: Build a sense of community.

Service: Provide the highest quality programs and facilities.

Sustainability: Support community stewardship of our built and natural environment.

Vision:

We envision an interconnected and accessible system of vibrant public spaces, friendly neighborhood parks, thriving natural areas, and diverse recreation opportunities that make our city a healthy, active, and beautiful place in which to live, work, and play.

BETHEL/DANEBO

The Bethel/Danebo planning district has experienced a high rate of growth over the past 10 years, with substantial additional growth anticipated over the next 10 years. Families with children are a significant part of the area’s demographic make-



up, with one of the highest number of people under 15 years of age in Eugene and an average household size of 2.56 individuals. This is a predominantly middle income area and is home to a higher proportion of Hispanics than the Eugene average. The needs of children, youth, and families are a high priority for planning parks, recreation and open space in Bethel/Danebo.

The residents of Bethel/Danebo are currently adequately served in their parks, recreation and open space facilities and programs with a ratio of 18.7 acres per 1,000 people, which is average for Eugene. The area has seven newly developed parks, including a community park, several neighborhood parks, and two natural areas in the West Eugene Wetlands. Meadowlark Prairie and Dragonfly Bend, situated in the lower Amazon Creek drainage area, provide excellent ways to access and appreciate the hundreds of acres of protected wetlands in the Bethel area. The area also offers diverse recreation programs and facilities at Petersen Barn Community Center and Echo Hollow Pool.

- To accommodate the continued projected growth in Bethel/Danebo, several projects are proposed in the comprehensive plan:
- Acquire four additional neighborhood park sites.
 - Acquire the land surrounding Golden Gardens for active recreation and natural area protection.
 - Improve and update existing facilities such as Echo Hollow Pool and Petersen Barn Community Center.

RIVER ROAD/SANTA CLARA

Several unique population factors were considered in the River Road/Santa Clara area. Most importantly, this area has experienced considerable growth over the past 10 years, and the population is anticipated to continue to increase about 27 percent by the year 2025.



Secondly, this area along with the Bethel area has the highest number of residents under the age of 15, as well as the largest average household size in Eugene at 2.62 persons per household. The area also has a significant number of people in the 40-60 age bracket. Therefore, in planning for the future



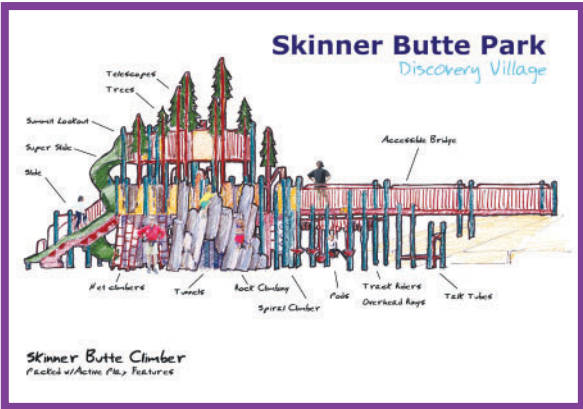
of parks, recreation and open space in the River/Road Santa Clara area, the needs of children, youth and families are more critical than in any other region of the city. In addition, the needs of older adults are also important.

Currently, this planning district has the lowest overall level of service for parks and open space in Eugene. While the comprehensive plan proposes a citywide goal of 20 acres for every 1,000 people,

the current level of service in the River Road/Santa Clara area is only 4 acres per 1,000 people. Parks of nearly every type are needed to meet this deficiency, most notably community parks, natural areas, and linear parks. Neighborhood park

CITY CENTRAL

In contrast with most other parts of Eugene, City Central has not experienced growth, and, in some areas, the population has actually declined. Because of its proximity to the University of Oregon, this planning district has the highest number of people 15 to 30 years old. This is also the lowest income area of the community. And, along with Bethel/Danebo, this area’s Hispanic population, primarily centered in the Whiteaker neighborhood, is higher than the Eugene average.



or two neighborhoods. This area, therefore, has a high proportion of metropolitan parks, such as Skinner Butte, Maurie Jacobs and Washington-Jefferson parks, and community facilities, including Campbell Senior Center, Owen Rose Garden and the River House.

- The following projects are proposed for City Central:
- Acquire open space in the courthouse/cannery district area, including access to the river.
 - Find a better location for West University Park by acquiring or trading land.
 - Improve existing parks and recreation areas, such as Skinner Butte Park and the Shelton-McMurphey-Johnson House.
 - Provide new recreation facilities, including a covered skatepark and an off-leash dog park.
 - Develop an aquatic center.
 - Improve connections between downtown and important parks and open space areas such as the Ridgeline and Amazon bikepath system.

- Add new recreation facilities, such as a full-service community center, soccer fields, tennis courts, running trail, and an off-leash dog park.
- Develop a vision for parks, open space, and neighborhood connections at the Union Pacific railyard site.



Planning for the comprehensive plan has been a great learning process about what we have and what we don't have and the need to equalize distribution of recreation and parks across our community.

—Merle Bottge

acreage has been acquired recently, and development will need to occur on these sites to provide basic recreation amenities, such as play areas, basketball courts, picnic areas, and walking paths.

To plan for the future, the following projects are proposed for River Road/Santa Clara:

- Acquire three neighborhood park sites.
- Acquire a community park site to include land for active recreation and natural areas similar to Amazon Park.
- Acquire additional natural areas, such as stream corridors and Willamette River frontage.
- Develop currently undeveloped public parkland, such as Terra Linda, Ross Lane, Filbert Meadows, Rosetta Place, and Wendover parks.
- Provide new recreation facilities such as a second Willamette River access and boat launch, disc golf course, and an off-leash dog park.
- Develop a major community center and aquatic facility north of the Beltline.
- Improve overall neighborhood accessibility and connectivity to parks and open space through bicycle and pedestrian trails and amenities.



As a reflection of our diverse community, the comprehensive plan attempts to be fair and inclusive and capture the essence of everything Eugene. Recognizing how difficult—in fact, impossible—it is to please everyone, we believe we have created a visionary document worthy of this unique city.

— Dan Arkin

The plan is a great road map for the future of our city and its parks.

—Dale Berg

NEIGHBORHOODS in this Planning District:

- Downtown Neighborhood Association
- Whiteaker Community Council
- Jefferson-Westside Neighbors
- part of Fairmount Neighbors
- part of West Eugene Community Organization
- part of West University Neighbors

A high priority of the comprehensive plan is to provide an accessible and connected park system. In Bethel/Danebo, this means removing any barriers to the use of the many high quality programs and places that exist in this area. This can be accomplished by making connections between

parks, schools, and neighborhoods and the newly restored Dragonfly Bend and Meadowlark Prairie natural area parks. These critical “connections” include safe pedestrian bridges and corridors, bike paths, interpretive trails, and access for people with disabilities.

NEIGHBORHOODS in this Planning District:

- Active Bethel Citizens
- Trainsong Neighbors
- part of Industrial Corridor Community Organization
- part of West Eugene Community Organization

A current proposal to acquire land via a swap with private land owners is aimed at meeting a large portion of the current parkland deficit in River Road/Santa Clara. This

77-acre acquisition is paired with a 130-acre acquisition in Laurel Hill Valley to expand the Ridgeline Trail. Through this acquisition, the goals of providing needed parkland and addressing the shortage of active recreation in this region of the city could be met. Growing population and development and scarce land resources make this cost-effective proposal a high priority citywide.

For more information about this

project, visit www.ci.eugene.or.us/PARKS/planning/SCCP_proj.htm.

NEIGHBORHOODS in this Planning District:

- River Road Community Organization
- Santa Clara Community Organization
- part of Industrial Corridor Community Organization

Research compiled during the extensive outreach phase of the comprehensive plan process shows that playground use has increased by 114 percent since 1987, that playgrounds are the second highest priority to Eugene citizens for outdoor facility needs, and that visiting play-

grounds ranks locally in the top 10 for all recreational activities. The regional RiverPlay playground at Skinner Butte Park was developed to meet the needs of our growing and changing community for generations to come. It will be the largest and most innovative playground in the area and will bring Eugene's natural and cultural history alive for children of all ages and abilities through innovative play areas such as a play replica of Skinner Butte, a miniature Willamette River, ancient history sand dig, and Kalapuya and pioneer villages. For more information about this exciting project and how you can help make it a reality, call 682-4907 or visit www.ci.eugene.or.us/parks/riverplay.

THE PRESENT AND FUTURE OF EUGENE PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE



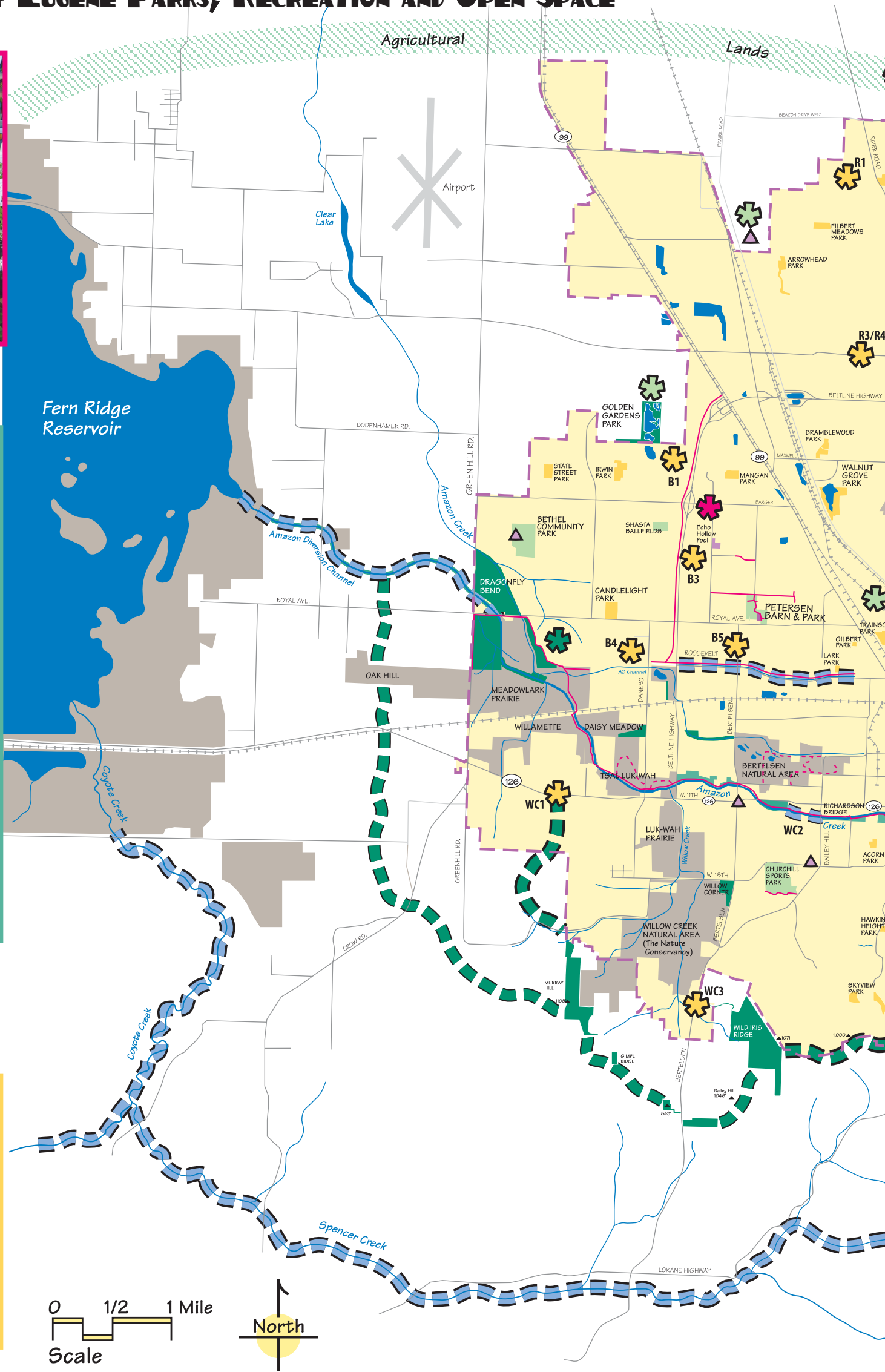
Urban Plaza: Provides social gathering space within urban areas. Photo: Farmers Market at park blocks

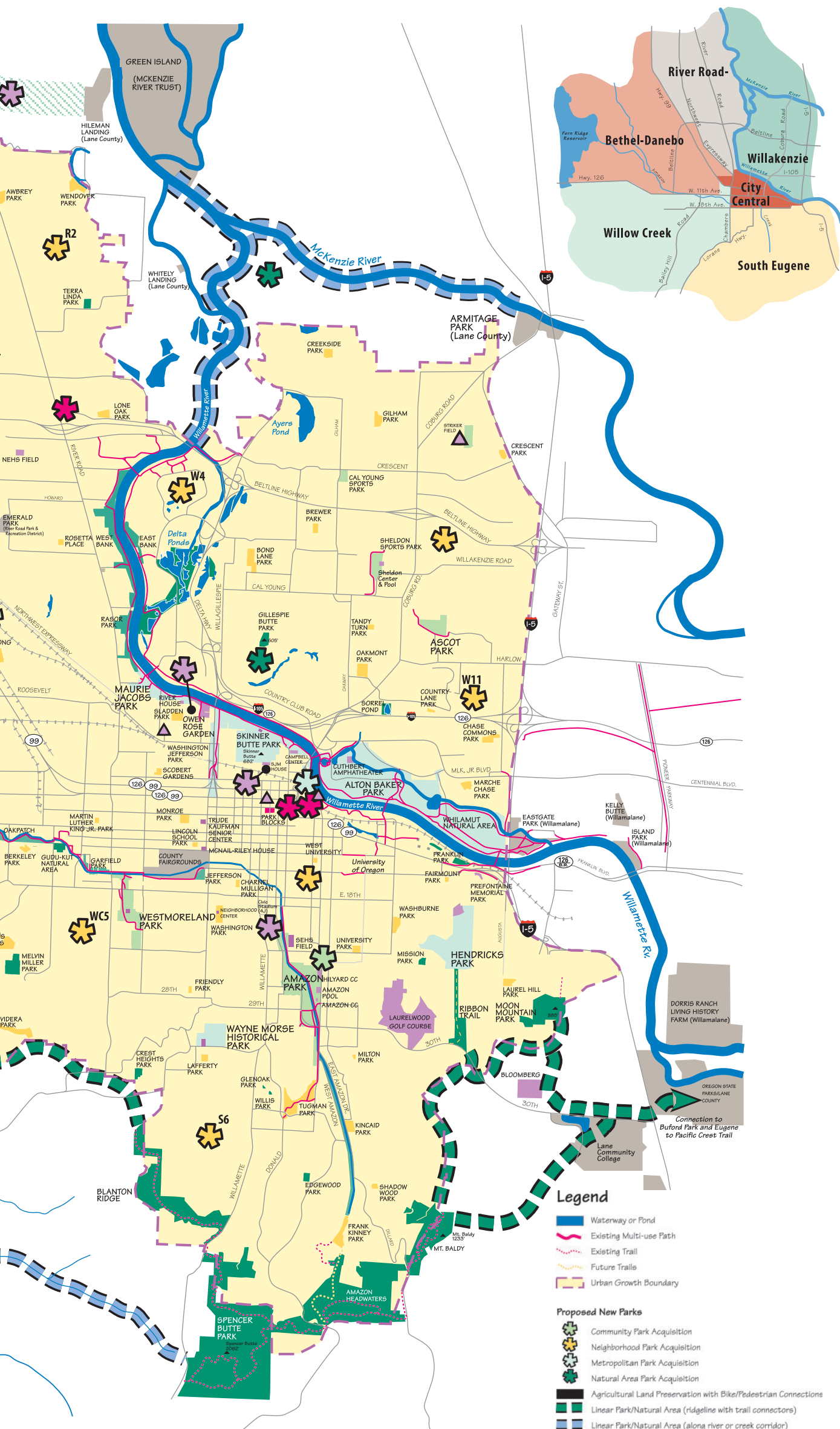


Linear Park/Greenway: A linear park preserves open space and provides public access to trail-oriented activities, such as walking, running, biking, and skating. Photo: Willamette West Bank bike path



Neighborhood Park: Small park located within biking and walking distance from homes in a certain geographical area that provides basic recreational opportunities to residents. Photo: Oakmont Park





Special Use Facility: Facilities that have unique features, historical significance, and/or specialized functions, such as senior, accessible, or youth programming. Photo: Amazon Community Center



Community Park: Larger park that provides active and passive recreational opportunities for all residents of the community. Photo: Churchill Sports Park



Natural Area Park: An area that protects natural resources and wildlife and provides opportunities for nature-based recreation, such as wildlife viewing, hiking, jogging, and bicycling. Photo: Meadowlark Prairie



Metropolitan Park: Larger park that preserves unique cultural and natural areas and/or provides features and facilities that attract and can accommodate visitors from the entire Eugene-Springfield area. Photo: Alton Baker Park

SOUTH EUGENE

According to the 2000 census, the population in South Eugene is the highest of the six planning districts at 33,915, or 21 percent of the city's population. Growth is still anticipated, and by 2025 the population is projected to reach 43,600, which represents a growth of 29 percent. This planning area also has a high percentage of people between 40 and 60 years of age, creating a population with different recreation and open space interests than one predominated by younger families.

In South Eugene, the ratio of parks and open space acreage to population is the highest in Eugene at 37.8 acres for every 1,000 people. Much of this acreage is part of the regional Ridgeline Trail open space system, but this planning district has



significant acreage in nearly all park types. Therefore, in planning for the future of parks, recreation and open space in this area, efforts will focus on improving and updating existing older parks. Also, a lack of pools, play areas, ballfields, and tennis

courts in other areas of the city has resulted in the use of Amazon Park/Pool as a regional rather than community facility, causing the facility to shoulder a disproportionate burden of the community's need for parks and recreation. Access to parks, recreation and open space is an issue in South Eugene because of the lack of street connectivity, steep slopes, and high traffic areas.

To address these needs, the following projects are proposed specifically for South Eugene:

- Acquire a new neighborhood park site and additional land for Amazon Park.

WILLOW CREEK

The Willow Creek planning district is currently the least populated planning district in the city. However, future growth in the area is anticipated with an

increase in population of 44 percent by 2025. Most other demographic factors, such as income, age, and household size, are typical for Eugene.

A number of parks, recreation and open space areas are currently provided to residents of Willow Creek, including newly acquired Ridgeline open space, new neighborhood parks, and development of a sports park at Churchill High School. Currently, the area offers 17.6 acres of parkland per 1,000 people. Since this figure is slightly below average and a couple of



acres below the proposed target of 20 acres per 1,000 people, additional acquisition will be needed to keep up with growth. In addition, existing neighborhood parks need to be updated, and newly acquired sites should be developed to provide adequate neighborhood park service to this planning area.

To address these issues, the following projects were proposed in the comprehensive plan for Willow Creek:

- Acquire four neighborhood park sites and expand the Ridgeline between Spencer Butte Park and the West Eugene Wetlands.
- Develop currently undeveloped neighborhood parks.
- Develop trail facilities, such as trailheads, hiking and biking trails, and interpretive trails.
- Develop a joint community center and aquatic center.
- Improve neighborhood connectivity to Amazon Creek greenway, Fern Ridge bikepath, Churchill Sports Park, and Ridgeline trailheads.

WILLAKENZIE

The Willakenzie area has experienced significant population growth since 1990, higher than average for Eugene, and will continue to grow as undeveloped residential lands are developed. Willakenzie's population for people over the age of 60 is higher than the area's average. The average household size is 2.3, equal to the Eugene average. The average household income in Willakenzie is higher than the Eugene average, although the Chase Garden area in Willakenzie has higher than average poverty rates.

Currently, Willakenzie residents are underserved in the area of parks, recreation and open space at 15.5 acres per 1,000 people, which is below the city's average. This is primarily due to the lack of neighborhood parks; 11 neighborhoods were found to lack adequate parks. The planning district does benefit significantly from proximity to the Willamette River, Alton Baker Park, and Delta Ponds although access to these areas needs improvement.

To address these issues, the following projects were proposed in the plan specifically for Willakenzie:

- Acquire two new neighborhood park sites and additional natural areas.

- Develop existing parks, including neighborhood parks, the Willakenzie school site, and Striker Fields.
- Provide new recreation amenities, including play areas, water spray parks, and off-leash dog facilities north of Beltline.

- Update existing parks and recreation facilities, including Sheldon Community Center, Bond Lane Park, Brewer Park, and Sorrel Pond.
- Provide more convenient and safer bicycle and pedestrian access to current and future parks, natural areas, and recreation facilities.



- Improve and update existing neighborhood, community and metropolitan parks, such as Friendly, Washburne, Amazon, and Hendricks parks.
- Develop new recreation facilities, such as water spray parks, mountain bike trails, Ridgeline trail connections, and trailhead facilities.
- Improve the ability of residents to access existing parks and open space areas with improved bicycle and pedestrian routes.



What was most impressive throughout this process was the persistent passion of residents about park issues.

—Terry Leary

NEIGHBORHOODS in this Planning District:

- Amazon Neighbors
- Southeast Neighbors
- Friendly Area Neighbors
- South University Neighborhood
- Laurel Hill Valley Citizens Association
- part of Crest Drive Citizens Association
- part of Fairmount Neighbors
- part of West University Neighbors

Improving aquatic facilities throughout Eugene was indicated as a high priority in the community survey and in other public input. Since South Eugene already has an outdoor pool, making improvements to the pool to accommodate year-round use was identified as a high priority project in the comprehensive plan. This would entail partially enclosing areas of the pool.

The plan is a working document, a basic tool for citizens to use to bring into being the very livable world of Eugene that they have envisioned these past three years. Now begins the hard part—making Eugene become this even better community. The comprehensive plan should be useful to everyone who steps forward to help.

—Linda Swisher



NEIGHBORHOODS in this Planning District:

- Churchill Area Neighbors
- Far West Neighborhood
- part of Crest Drive Citizens Association
- part of West Eugene Community Organization

The 1998 bond measure funded \$3.7 million to expand the Ridgeline Trail open space system east to Moon Mountain and west to the Willow Creek headwaters. Over the past seven years, over 360 acres have been added, including significant acreage in sites around Willow Creek, Gimpl Hill, and Bailey Hill. More acreage, however, is needed to connect these open space areas that are rich in natural resources. Emphasis, therefore, will be placed on acquiring additional parcels in these areas, developing trails and trailheads, and acquiring neighborhood parks that can also serve as connections to the greater open space network—both the Ridgeline and the West Eugene Wetlands.



This process blended the expertise of staff that work in this field every day and melded it with the ideas and interests of Eugene's citizens.

—Corey Dingman

NEIGHBORHOODS in this Planning District:

- Cal Young Neighborhood
- Harlow Neighbors

This plan incorporates one of the more important aspects of parks and recreation—educating the public about the natural world. It also attempts to connect neighborhoods together and provide better access to parks. And, it accomplishes all of this by focusing on collaborative agreements.

—Tim Whitley

The City has had great success in the past developing effective partnerships with other public agencies, neighborhood groups, businesses, and non-profits. One of the more significant partnerships has been the collaboration with school districts 4J and Bethel. By working together, the City and area schools have provided quality programs, built state-of-the-art facilities, and efficiently utilized limited resources of land and funding. Examples of the positive outcome of these City/school partnerships include Sheldon and Cal Young sports parks. The comprehensive plan emphasizes the need to continue and expand these partnerships to undertake future projects such as the recently acquired Willakenzie school site and Striker Fields.

COME TO OUR OPEN HOUSE!

Beginning February 15, public open houses will be conducted in each of six planning districts. The open houses will include displays outlining major goals of the plan, the vision for citywide improvements, and specific proposals for each planning district. Staff will be on hand to answer questions, and public input will be solicited via questionnaires and comment cards. Significant feedback gathered at these sessions will be used to finalize the comprehensive plan by this summer.

Tuesday, February 15

City Central Planning District, 4-7 p.m.
at Campbell Community Center,
155 High Street

Thursday, February 17

River Road/Santa Clara Planning District,
4-7 p.m. at Spring Creek Elementary
School, 560 Irvington Dr.

Tuesday, February 22

South Eugene Planning District, 4-7 p.m.
at Hilyard Community Center,
2580 Hilyard Street

Thursday, February 24

Willow Creek Planning District,
4-7 p.m. at Churchill High School
Library, 1850 Bailey Hill Rd.

Tuesday, March 1

Willakenzie Planning District, 4-7 p.m.
at Sheldon High School Library,
2455 Willakenzie Rd.

Thursday, March 3

Bethel/Danebo Planning District,
4-7 p.m. at Willamette High School
Cafeteria, 1801 Echo Hollow Rd.

THANK YOU, MAYOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE

For the past 2 1/2 years, a Mayor's Advisory Committee has been meeting monthly to help envision the future for Eugene's parks, recreation and open space. Not surprisingly, the backgrounds, values and input of these members and the over 3,000 Eugene residents who have participated in this process were as diverse as the community from which they came. Still, these committee members stayed the course and found common ground in the collective desire to create a more livable, vibrant and accessible community. We commend you for your commitment, and we thank all of you for the tremendous contribution you have made in creating a practical, long-term and inspirational plan that truly reflects the extraordinary and resource-rich community in which we live.



Back row, left to right: Corey Dingman; Art Farley; Roxie Cuellar; Merle Bottge; Terry Leary; Dale Berg. Front row, left to right: Dan Arkin; Steve Johnson; Linda Swisher; Nancy Nathanson, Chair; Tim Whitley. (Former members not pictured: Jacoby Black; Cynthia Girling; Barbara Keller; Arbrella Luvert; Avishai Schermerhorn)

THE MAKING OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

July 2002

First monthly Mayor's Advisory Committee meeting

Nov. 2002–April 2003

Community group presentations and questionnaires (751)

Jan.–Feb. 2003

Stakeholder interviews (12)

Jan.–May 2003

Focus group meetings and questionnaires (179)

- Business community
- Library, Recreation, Cultural Services staff
- Multi-cultural
- Natural resources
- Parks & Open Space maintenance staff
- Recreation service providers

Feb. 2003

Community survey, random sampling (437)

May 2003

Organized sports providers questionnaires (21)

May 2003

Youth questionnaires (647)

Sept. 2003

Eugene Celebration questionnaires (456)

Nov. 2003

Community open house

April 2004

Community Design Forum (70)

Dec. 2004

Final monthly meeting of the Mayor's Advisory Committee

Dec. 2004

Draft plan presented to City Council

Feb.–March 2005

Planning district open houses

Spring 2005

Incorporate feedback from the above meetings and refine plan.

Summer 2005

Present final plan to City Council for adoption.

Note: Number in () indicates completed surveys or questionnaires or participants.

CITYWIDE RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the proposals for each of the six planning districts, the plan also includes strategies and projects that benefit the entire city.

Sample projects include:

- Renovate and update aging park signage, irrigation, park lighting, restrooms, bridges, and trails to improve safety and efficiency and to expand use.
- Develop a list of improvements needed to ensure that people of all abilities are able to visit, use, and enjoy our parks, natural areas, and recreation facilities safely and with dignity.
- Develop an Environmental Education Center to support natural resource-based education, recreation, interpretation, and research.
- Acquire natural areas and develop connections to link Eugene's existing open space areas, such as the Willamette River Greenway, Ridgeline, and Amazon

Creek, with regional open space and trail networks, including Fern Ridge, Willamette and McKenzie rivers, and Mt. Pisgah.



Eugene Outdoors! is published semiannually by the City of Eugene Parks and Open Space Division to share information about Eugene's parks and open space and encourage the community to enjoy our recreational facilities, parks and natural areas. Let us know what you think about Eugene's parks and open space. Contact us by phone, mail, e-mail, or through the web.

City of Eugene
Public Works Department
Parks and Open Space Division
1820 Roosevelt Boulevard, Eugene, Oregon 97402
(541) 682-4800 • Fax (541) 682-4882
E-mail: pos@ci.eugene.or.us
www.ci.eugene.or.us/parks

Therese Picado, Editor • Kim Mast, Graphic Designer